

STATUS OF THE FIGHT FOR CORPORATION COMMISSIONER

(By F. A. Whitten, State Secretary Retail Merchants of Oklahoma Ass'n)

There are two—one for the long term, and for the short term. Two positions, next in importance to that of Governor of the State.

As Secretary of the Retail Merchants Association of Oklahoma, I feel that it is my duty to enlighten you upon this one important matter, I shall not attempt to tell you whom to vote for or against, but simply to lay some facts before you that you may not act blindly and indifferently.

Henry Willmering is a candidate for the long term, bearing the endorsement of Jack Love, Chairman of the Corporation Commission, who says "Willmering is a true and fair friend of the people and his attitude toward rate and service regulation as applied to all utilities." Col. Jack's endorsement is preceded by the caption, "A Man Who KNOWS Henry Willmering." This article is written by another man who KNOWS Henry Willmering; but knows the side that Col. Jack has not pictured.

In 1910 Henry Willmering, then an employee of the Corporation Commission, as one of his duties, was delegated to make a physical inventory of the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company, a public utility located in Oklahoma City. Henry's salary as an employee of the Commission was \$2,500 per annum. Before the physical inventory was completed, at any rate before it was filed, and, to be exact, in April, 1911, Henry hired himself to the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company at a salary of \$3,500 per annum, with a contract for five years and a bonus of \$5,000 as Chief Accountant. Now, that you may know what the press thought of this transaction at the time, I quote an editorial appearing in the Daily Oklahoman under date of April 28, 1911, entitled, "MEN WHO SELL OUT."

"When a detective who has been working on a case accepts employment at the hands of the person or corporation he has been 'following' and deprives his first employer of the information they have paid him to secure, it is unjust, if not downright dishonesty. Most people would consider it dishonest."

"When the government employs an inspector to investigate persons or corporations who are suspected of fraud or other forms of criminality, and that person quits the government service to enter the employ of the individual or corporation, without giving the government the benefit of the information he secured, that inspector is dishonest."

"The same may be said of the divorce attorney who betrays one client for another. And it applies to a corporation employee or the employee of an individual who accepts a 'better position' merely to sell the secrets or information secured for his former employer."

Suppose, for instance, an employee of the Corporation Commission were given the task of investigating a corporation, and, AFTER DISCOVERING SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES, should accept employment from that corporation and thus prevent correction of those irregularities, is it not plain that the act would be one of dishonesty, and also detrimental to the general welfare?

"This kind of betrayal is not uncommon, and would seem to warrant the discovery and application of some means to some means to prevent such perfidy."

To show how close the Oklahoman

editorial was to the truth, and how unimportant and unnecessary Henry's position with the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company was at that time, I will say that for the balance of the year 1911 and 1912 Henry had no regular assigned duties, but spent most of the time "hobnobbing" with members and employees of the Corporation Commission and did not fill a position with the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company until the spring of 1913, because they had an auditor at \$2,400 per annum and a chief bookkeeper at \$1,800 per annum, both of whom had been filling their positions satisfactorily for a number of years, and the chief bookkeeper is still performing his duties in that capacity.

In January, 1912, through the influence of Henry and Col. Jack Love, the company auditor was discharged in order to make a place for Henry and give him some excuse to draw his salary. The reason given at the time was because of a general retrenchment in overhead expenses being deemed necessary at the Home Office in Chicago.

In 1914 there was another retrenchment, and the writer, who had served the Company in various capacities, from collector of bills to treasurer of the Company, covering a continuous period of nearly ten years, was discharged through the influence of Willmering and Col. Jack Love because he knew of and failed to appreciate and endorse the secret relationship which existed through Willmering between the Commission and the Gas Company, the reason given, however, was the great necessity for retrenchment.

To further show that Willmering's position was of a political nature, rather than because of his ability as an EXPERT of any character, I quote you my service letter that was given me after my discharge:

"Oklahoma City, Okla.,

January 16, 1914.

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"The bearer of this letter, Mr. Frank A. Whitten, at present Treasurer of this company, is leaving us on account of a necessary order for retrenchment in office expenses, promulgated by our head office, in which the undersigned is directed to consolidate our collection and accounting departments under one head, and to place the consolidated departments under the direction of our present Chief Accountant. This decision has doubtless been arrived at because of the latter's (Willmering's) UNUSUAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVING THE COMPANY'S INTERESTS AND DOUBTFUL GOVERNMENT BODIES, and doubtless, therefore, in the opinion of the head office, a more valuable man to the company. In the above respect, has been selected from two good men. This obliges us to dispense with Mr. Whitten's services."

"He has served in his present capacity since 1909 and has proven himself to be most obliging, ever ready to co-operate with the local management in conducting his department along the most efficient lines, and is a tireless, conscientious and capable worker. He has always had the interests of this company in mind. He has been employed in this office almost continuously for ten years, having filled a number of positions here previous to the present one as treasurer, with satisfaction to the company and credit to himself. The writer believes him to be unusually well qualified, there-

fore, to fill any position with any gas and electric company, to its entire satisfaction, and to make a valuable man in such a company's office force."

"The writer believes that any other company so employing him will have no cause for regret, but, on the contrary, will have in Mr. Whitten's services a valuable acquisition."

"Yours very truly,

OKLAHOMA GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY,

"By W. R. MOLINARD, Manager."

Since my discharge "because of hard times" and to reduce the operating expenses, Willmering's monthly expense account for entertainments, etc., has amounted to more than my former salary.

Mr. Merchant, do you want to put in the high office of Corporation Commissioner whose duties are to regulate and control the public utilities, a man who will sell out at a price in the middle of an investigation? His physical inventory report was suppressed and never filed.

Why, then, does Col. Jack Love endorse Willmering, you may ask? I will tell you why. Col. Jack has always controlled the Commission by reason of having one plant man with him on all things. That is the reason he so strongly endorsed A. P. Watson during his last campaign. He wanted to continue to control the Commission, but the Legislature interfered slightly with his arrangement by removing Mr. Watson from office, which is evidence that Col. Jack's endorsement is not at all times unquestionable. With two places to be filled now there is danger of Col. Jack's losing control of the Commission. He knows, as he knew when he endorsed Watson, that if Willmering gets in he still has control, and as he KNOWS Willmering he knows he can control him, AND THE OKLAHOMA GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY KNOWS IT CAN AND DOES CONTROL BOTH.

It is reported that Willmering's most important campaign headquarters are maintained at the Commission office, and that all literature and letters of endorsement are dictated and written by employees of the Corporation Commission on the regular pay roll. It is generally understood among the employees of the Commission that their positions depend upon their support of Willmering's candidacy.

FINE CORN

Pete Davis, who lives four miles west of Calera, brought to the News office this week a couple of fine stalks of corn raised on sandy prairie land. The stalks are nine feet in height and each has two well-filled ears. Pete says the stalks were picked at random from the field, and that they were not selected as the best. He plowed the corn six times and laid it by on the Fourth of July.



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TO PASS CHILD LABOR BILL THIS SESSION OF CONGRESS

President Wilson Has Notified the Lawmakers That He Wishes an Immediate Action on This Important Measure.

Washington, July 26.—Yielding to an urgent request from President Wilson, Democrats of the Senate in caucus, have determined to pass the child labor bill at this session of Congress.

The decision was reached after a long debate during which several of the Southern Senators whose opposite forced the measure out of the imperative legislation program that was drawn up several days ago, vigorously objected to its reinstatement at this time. The final determination to include it was reached without a record vote. It will displace the shipping bill on the Senate calendar, coming up as soon as the army District of Columbia appropriations have been passed. The shipping measure will follow it in order, and the revenue bill will come next.

Majority Leader Kern outlined to the caucus the President's earnest request for a vote on the child labor bill before adjournment and read a flood of telegrams from influential citizens throughout the country requesting its passage.

Southern Senators replied, insisting that the caucus stand on its former decision postponing consideration of the measure until December. They appealed for a declaration of principle that the child labor bill should be taken out of politics and revealed the fact that negotiations had been made with some of the Republican Senators after the recent Democratic caucus a few days ago with a view to reaching an agreement for taking up the bill next session as a strictly non-partisan measure.

PROTRACTED MEETINGS

Commencing the second Saturday night in August, the Christians will hold protracted meetings at the Iron stob five and a half miles northwest of the city to which the public is invited. The meetings will be conducted by Rev. J. C. White, of Hico, Texas.

POST OFFICE ROBBER CAUGHT

Ernest Martin, living near Roberta, has been arrested and turned over to the federal authorities last week, on complaint that he was one of the robbers of the Roberta post office, which occurred in May, last spring. Martin is said to have confessed to the crime. It is said that he was arrested on account of a promiscuous use of postage due stamps which are never sold from post offices.

J. H. JOHNSTON.

The farmers of the state are as vitally interested as any class of people in the office of Corporation Commissioner.

Mr. J. H. Johnston of Oklahoma City is a candidate for Commissioner and has a record of efficiency and practical farming which makes him the logical candidate for both the farmer and business man. He has the endorsement of nearly every business man in the state.

He is an expert traffic man and understands rates and knows the needs of the farmer as he operates farms in Roger Mills and Grady counties.

He is square, fearless and practical. Talk to your business men about him—see why they need an expert traffic man in this position.



His Record.

Mr. Johnston was for 13 years in the traffic department of the Santa Fe railway. Was traffic manager of the Gulf & Interstate Railway for 1 year; was assistant to the president of the M. O. & G. Railway during the time the line was built from Wagoner to Joplin. Was for twelve years the Traffic manager of the Galveston chamber of commerce and Oklahoma Traffic association, and represented the people of these two states before the Texas, Oklahoma and Interstate Commerce Commissioners.

He was for two years a member of the Tax Efficiency League, Oklahoma City, assisting in the saving of more than \$852,000 to the honest taxpayers. He is a practical farmer and an expert accountant and is president of a retail store in Oklahoma City.

His record justifies your support and your own interests demand and need his efficiency.

Get behind him. He has no axe to grind other than the proper filing of his office and you can depend upon him.

(Pol. Adv.)

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